

**DECLARATION OF SANDRA BUCKNER  
IN SUPPORT OF DEFAULT DECISION AND ORDER**

I, Sandra Buckner, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of 18 years, and am not a party to the within action. My business address is 428 J Street, Suite 620, Sacramento, California.

2. I am an Investigator III for the Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission (the "Commission"), and have worked for the Commission since July 1989. I was the lead investigator handling the allegations concerning campaign contributions linked to Respondent Latino Builders Industry Association that were made in the San Diego area, and possible laundering activity by Respondent in violation of Section 84301. As such, I am familiar with the evidence contained in Respondent's investigative file (FPPC No. 04/250), and can testify as stated herein of my own knowledge and belief.

3. I obtained copies of records filed with the Office of the California Attorney General which revealed that Latino Builders Industry Association was a 501(c)(6) business league organization under the Internal Revenue Code. The documents revealed that Jose Mireles is the Executive Director for the Latino Builders Industry Association (hereafter "Latino Builders").

4. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Bob Griego from the Chula Vista City Clerk, and verified that Bob Griego was a candidate for Chula Vista City Council in 2001. The campaign statement for Bob Griego for the reporting period of 10/01/01 to 12/31/01 revealed that Ricardo Gomez and James Ridley each made a \$250 contribution to Bob Griego on November 5, 2001. The campaign statement stated that Ricardo, or as reported "Rick", Gomez was employed by Latino Builders. The campaign statement reported that James Ridley's employer was Latino Builders and his occupation was an administrator. The campaign statement also revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$250 campaign contribution to Bob Griego on November 5, 2001.

5. I obtained a copy of the contributor check to Bob Griego's campaign committee records for James Ridley from Mr. Ridley's bank account.

6. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Ralph Inzunza from the San Diego City Clerk, and verified that Ralph Inzunza was a candidate for San Diego City Council in 2001. The campaign statement for Ralph Inzunza for the reporting period of 10/01/01 to 12/31/01 revealed that James Ridley made a \$250 contribution to Ralph Inzunza on November 16, 2001. The campaign statement stated that James Ridley was employed by Latino Builders as a developer. The campaign statement also revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$250 campaign contribution to Ralph Inzunza on November 16, 2001.

7. I obtained copies of contributor checks from Ralph Inzunza's campaign committee records for James Ridley. The committee produced a copy of James Ridley's personal check for \$250 issued on November 15, 2001.

8. I contacted the city clerks for the cities of Chula Vista and San Diego and verified that they had campaign finance ordinances which limited campaign contributions to \$250 per person per election between 2001 and 2002, and that corporate or business contributions were prohibited.

9. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Juan Vargas from the Secretary of State's office, and verified that Juan Vargas was a candidate for the State Assembly – 79<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in 2001. The campaign statement for Juan Vargas for the reporting period of 10/01/01 to 12/31/01 revealed that James Ridley made a \$500 contribution to Juan Vargas on December 6, 2001. The campaign statement stated that James Ridley was employed by Latino Builders as a developer. The campaign statement also revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$1,000 campaign contribution to Juan Vargas on December 6, 2001.

10. I obtained a copy of the contributor check James Ridley issued to Juan Vargas' campaign committee from Mr. Ridley's bank account.

11. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Steve Padilla from the Chula Vista City Clerk's office, and verified that Steve Padilla was a candidate for the Chula Vista City Council in 2002. The campaign statement for Steve Padilla for the reporting period of 01/01/02 to 01/19/02 disclosed that J.V. Gomez made a \$250 contribution to Steve Padilla on January 19, 2002. The campaign statement stated that J. V. Gomez was employed in marketing by "Go Go Promo." The campaign statement for Steve Padilla for the reporting period of 01/20/02 to 02/16/02

disclosed that Visaya Cunanan made a \$250 contribution to Steve Padilla on February 1, 2002. The campaign statement stated that information regarding Ms. Cunanan's occupation and employer had been requested. The campaign statement for the reporting period 01/01/02 to 01/19/02 also revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$250 campaign contribution to Steve Padilla on January 19, 2002.

12. I obtained copies of contributor checks from Steve Padilla's campaign committee records for J.V. Gomez and Visaya Cunanan. The committee produced a copy of a \$250 Traveler's Express Company money order in the name of J. V. Gomez issued on January 19, 2002, and a copy of a \$250 Bank of America cashier's check in the name of Visaya Cunanan issued on February 1, 2002.

13. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Greg Sandoval from the San Diego County Registrar of Voter's office, and verified that Greg Sandoval was a candidate for the Sweetwater Union High School District Board of Trustees in 2002. The campaign statement for Greg Sandoval for the reporting period of 07/01/02 to 09/30/02 disclosed that Visaya Cunanan made a \$200 contribution to Greg Sandoval on August 15, 2002. The campaign statement for the reporting period 07/01/02 to 09/30/02 also revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$250 campaign contribution, and that Respondent Latino Builders made a \$1,000 contribution to Greg Sandoval on August 15, 2002.

14. I obtained a copy of the contributor check from Greg Sandoval's campaign committee records for Visaya Cunanan. The \$200 check was issued on Ms. Cunanan's personal checking account on August 15, 2002.

15. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for Nick Inzunza from the City Clerk of National City, and verified that Nick Inzunza was a candidate for National City City Council in 2002. The campaign statement for Nick Inzunza for the reporting period of 10/20/02 to 12/31/02 disclosed that Ricardo Gomez made a \$100 contribution to Nick Inzunza on October 24, 2002. The campaign statement for the reporting period 10/20/02 to 12/31/02 also revealed that Respondent Latino Builders made a \$1,000 contribution to Nick Inzunza on October 24, 2002.

16. I obtained a copy of the contributor check from Nick Inzunza's campaign committee records for Ricardo Gomez. The \$100 Western Union money order was issued in the name of Ricardo Gomez on October 24, 2002.

1 17. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for  
2 Steve Castaneda from the Chula Vista City Clerk, and verified that Steve Castaneda was a candidate for  
3 Chula Vista City Council in 2003 and 2004. The campaign statement for Steve Castaneda for the  
4 reporting period of 07/01/03 to 09/30/03 disclosed that Julissa Cabrera made a \$100 contribution to  
5 Steve Castaneda on September 24, 2003. The prior campaign statement for the reporting period  
6 04/17/03 to 06/30/03 revealed that Jose Mireles made a \$250 contribution to Steve Castaneda on June  
7 28, 2003. The campaign statement for Steve Castaneda for the reporting period of 10/01/04 to 10/16/04  
8 disclosed that Julissa Cabrera made a \$200 contribution to Steve Castaneda on October 14, 2004, and  
9 that Jose Mireles made a \$250 contribution to Steve Castaneda on October 14, 2004.

10 18. I obtained a copy of the contributor checks from Steve Castaneda's campaign committee records  
11 for Julissa Cabrera. The \$100 and \$200 checks issued to Steve Castaneda were issued on Ms. Cabrera's  
12 personal checking account on October 24, 2003 and October 15, 2004.

13 19. During the course of my investigation, I obtained copies of various campaign statements for  
14 Raquel Marquez from the San Diego County Registrar of Voters, and verified that Raquel Marquez was  
15 a candidate for the San Ysidro School Board in 2004. The campaign statements for Raquel Marquez do  
16 not reveal that a campaign contribution from Julissa Cabrera was reported by the committee. However,  
17 bank records obtained from Ms. Cabrera's checking account revealed that a personal check in the  
18 amount of \$250 issued to Raquel Marquez' campaign committee on October 27, 2004, cleared the bank  
19 on November 5, 2004.

20 20. During the course of my investigation, I issued a subpoena for Julissa Cabrera's bank account  
21 records for September through November 2003 and October through November 2004. In reviewing  
22 those bank records, I found that Ms. Cabrera deposited cash into her bank account at or about the same  
23 time as she made the foregoing campaign contributions, and that she did not have adequate funds in her  
24 bank account without the deposits to cover the amount of the contributions.

25 21. On November 18, 2005, I interviewed Jose Mireles at Respondent's place of business in San  
26 Diego. Mr. Mireles stated that he made contributions to Chula Vista City Council candidate Steve  
27 Padilla, because he knew him and he always supported Latino candidates. Mr. Mireles stated that he  
28 sometimes asked other people to attend political fund-raising events, but he didn't recall telling people

1 that he would reimburse them if they made a contribution. Mr. Mireles stated that he did not recall  
2 reimbursing others for making contributions. Mr. Mireles then asked whether I had contacted his  
3 attorney. When I stated that I was not aware that he was represented, Mr. Mireles provided me with the  
4 name of his and Respondent's attorney and I ended the interview. Before leaving, I served Mr. Mireles  
5 with a subpoena for his personal bank records, Respondent's business records, and a subpoena for his  
6 personal testimony. I also served Respondent's employee, Julissa Cabrera, who was present, with a  
7 subpoena for her testimony and for her bank records. Mr. Mireles told me that Ms. Cabrera was also  
8 represented by Respondent's attorney.

9 22. On July 5, 2005, I interviewed Jesus Gomez about the \$250 contribution he reportedly made to  
10 Steve Padilla. Jesus Gomez stated that he did not make the contribution, and knew nothing about it. He  
11 stated that he never used his initials "J.V." and never made political contributions. He stated that his son,  
12 Ricardo Gomez, had worked for Respondent and Jose Mireles in the past, and that the employer listed  
13 for "J.V. Gomez" as "Go Go Promo" on Steve Padilla's campaign statement was a company owned by  
14 his son Ricardo Gomez.

15 23. On July 11, 2005, I contacted Ricardo Gomez by telephone to inquire about contributions he  
16 made in 2002. Mr. Gomez stated that in 2002 he worked for Respondent as the editor of its magazine  
17 *Latino Builders*. Mr. Gomez stated that he was politically active at that time, and made contributions to  
18 Ralph Inzunza and other local candidates using his own funds. Mr. Gomez then stated that he was  
19 uncomfortable talking on the telephone about the matter, and requested an in-person meeting.

20 24. On November 18, 2005, I interviewed Ricardo Gomez again at his parents' home in San Diego.  
21 Mr. Gomez stated that he worked as an independent contractor for Respondent starting in late summer  
22 of 2001 for about 12 to 18 months. He performed sales work, and later became the editor of  
23 Respondent's magazine *Latino Builders*. Mr. Gomez stated that Jose Mireles was his boss. While  
24 working for Respondent, Mr. Gomez stated that he attended political fundraisers, and usually made  
25 contributions using money orders. Mr. Gomez stated that he did not have a checking account at that  
26 time. Mr. Gomez stated that Mr. Mireles reimbursed him for any contributions he made by giving him a  
27 company check, which he would cash and use to purchase a money order. The check from Respondent  
28 would be in the exact amount of the contribution, and would be justified as a reimbursement for gas or

1 some other company expense. Mr. Gomez stated that he would not have made these political  
2 contributions with his own money at that time, due to budgetary restrictions. I also asked Ricardo  
3 Gomez about the money order issued in his father's name. Mr. Gomez stated that he purchased the  
4 money order in his father's name, at the request of Jose Mireles, with money provided by Respondent.  
5 25. On July 5 and 8, 2005, and on September 1, 2006, I conducted interviews with James Ridley. In  
6 the interviews, Mr. Ridley provided background information regarding Respondent's business operation,  
7 and stated that he worked for Respondent from 1997 through March of 2003. Mr. Ridley stated that he  
8 became politically active while working for Respondent and made campaign contributions at the  
9 suggestion of Jose Mireles. Mr. Ridley stated that prior to 2002 he was reimbursed by Respondent for  
10 the contributions he made. Mr. Ridley stated that Jose Mireles asked that the contributions be made, and  
11 offered the reimbursements. From 2002 until he left Respondent's employment, Mr. Ridley stated that  
12 he was not reimbursed for campaign contributions that he made. He stated that reimbursement prior to  
13 2002 came in the form of an increased bonus check for any contributions he made. Reimbursements  
14 were made by a check drawn on Respondent's bank account and signed by Jose Mireles. Mr. Ridley  
15 stated that he became uncomfortable with the reimbursements when he later learned that it was illegal,  
16 and after 2002, he began making contributions with his own funds.

17 26. On March 23, 2004, I interviewed Visaya Cunanan about her campaign contributions. In her  
18 interview, Ms. Cunanan stated that she had worked for Respondent for 3 ½ years as an outreach  
19 coordinator. She stated that her boss, Jose Mireles, recommended that she make campaign contributions  
20 and reimbursed her for the contributions she made. She stated that she was not financially able to make  
21 the contributions without reimbursement, and probably made only two contributions.

22 27. On July 12, 2005, Julissa Cabrera contacted me by telephone in response to a business  
23 card I had left at her home on July 8, 2005. During the conversation, Ms. Cabrera stated that she had  
24 worked for Respondent since February 2002. She stated that she normally made political contributions,  
25 attended some of the fundraisers, and had been a candidate for a political committee a few years ago.  
26 She stated that she was not reimbursed for political contributions that she made. As stated above, I  
27 served Ms. Cabrera with a subpoena for her bank records on November 18, 2005 at her place of  
28 business. Ms. Cabrera's subpoenaed bank records revealed that she deposited \$100 in cash into her

1 checking account on September 25, 2003, one day after she wrote the \$100 contribution check to Steve  
2 Castaneda. The bank records also reflect that Ms. Cabrera only had a checking account balance of  
3 \$235.24 on September 23, 2003. Her subpoenaed bank records also revealed that she deposited \$100 in  
4 cash into her checking account on October 15, 2004, one day after she wrote the \$200 contribution  
5 check to Steve Castaneda. The bank records reflect that on the day Ms. Cabrera wrote the \$200  
6 campaign contribution she only had a checking account balance of \$180.11. The subpoenaed bank  
7 records also revealed that Ms. Cabrera deposited \$240 in cash into her checking account on October 28,  
8 2004, one day after she wrote the \$250 contribution check to Raquel Marquez. The bank records reflect  
9 that on the day Ms. Cabrera wrote the \$250 campaign contribution to Raquel Marquez she only had a  
10 checking account balance of \$202.42.

11  
12 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, that the foregoing is  
13 true and correct.

14 Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sandra Buckner  
Investigator III, Enforcement Division  
Fair Political Practices Commission